

FEATURES



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2-6B BEAUTIFUL BEGINNINGS | 7-8B OBITUARIES | 8B CHURCHES

GPAA welcomes photomontage artist for Sept. 28 lecture

By Jody McVeigh
Editor

In the few years Adam Strange has been exhibiting his work in Grosse Pointe Artists Association exhibitions, GPAA President Karen Pope said his art typically draws the most comments and questions.

“People come in and look at his art and ask,

‘How did he get that photograph?’” she said. “He didn’t; it’s not a photo. It’s a montage.

“I think this is a new process and it’s something people are interested in,” she continued. “For our exhibitors, at least, it’s a very new thing. This is an opportunity to explain this new medium of art.”

The Grosse Pointe Art Center Education

Committee, in association with Detroit Month of Design, presents “World Critique Through Digital Montage,” at 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 28, featuring a lecture by Strange.

“The biggest influences in my life are artists that are close to me,” Strange said. “My father was an artist and he inspired me to experiment as a teenager.”

Experiments included “exquisite corpses” — a take on a parlor game in which players write, in turn, on a sheet of paper, fold to conceal what they have written and pass it on to the next player, but adapted so parts of the body are drawn instead.

“I was doing all kinds of artistic activities without knowing the context,” he said. “I didn’t know dadaism or surrealism. My father led myself and my siblings into artistic experimentation from a very young age. As I got older, I discovered surrealism.”

His discovery inspired him to decide “art was the life I wanted to pursue,” he said.

Strange, who lives in London, Ontario,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ADAM STRANGE

“The Weight,” a digital photomontage by Adam Strange.

Canada, graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1992. He spent 30 years working in graphic design before refocusing his life on fine art.

“In 2018, I was having a moment of existential crisis,” Strange said. “I had been a graphic designer for the past 30 years, but it was always just a job. I was also using these creative skills and abilities for something I didn’t believe in. In 2018, I decided to use my technical skills to create images on a computer and switch back to early inspiration. Photomontage is some-

thing that was a logical extension out of my graphic design skills on a computer. Having all these computer skills, I was going to make images I wanted to make now. Since 2018, there has been no other intention than expressing my thoughts, ideas and feelings.”

As a digital artist, Strange garners copyright-free photos from photo-sharing websites and uses commercial graphic design assets to “simulate something on the computer to look like something else,” he said. “The assets that are available help simulate different styles and mediums. ... I’ll use those in whatever ways necessary to express my ideas.”

His Sept. 28 presentation will focus on the methods he uses to create art, as well as some of the technical aspects to photomontage.

“I’ll look at my work, the evolution of it, the technical work of photomontage and the methods I use,” he said.

Though influenced by surrealists and dadaists, Strange said he’s still trying to define his own work.

“My motivation is to develop my own visual language out of my own imagination,” he said. “... It’s imaginative, but just because you use your imagination doesn’t make it surreal.”

“... Now that I’m making artwork again, art has to have some func-

tion beyond the aesthetic,” he added. “I want to make them interesting, aesthetically pleasing and detailed and descriptive, so one side is aesthetic and one side is the message. ... Artists should be obligated to speak out on issues that are important to them. I feel it’s part of my duty to engage in these dialogues and conversations through my work to sort of liberate people.”

Strange’s lecture will largely include a digital presentation, as well as samples of his work. A question-and-answer session will follow.

“People that are interested in social activities, politics and art are going to be interested in what I have to say,” Strange said. “It would be challenging for most viewers to look at my work or listen to me talk about the nature and the content of the images. It’s important that everyone has a chance to face art that challenges them on really fundamental levels. What am I looking at? What does it mean? Those are the questions they should be asking so when they walk away they continue that questioning in the rest of their lives. It’s going to be an interesting afternoon.”

“Arrive early,” he added. “I look forward to seeing everyone there. I hope people interested in art from Grosse Pointe and Detroit come see it and listen to it.”



The artist



“Dogs of War,” a digital photomontage by Adam Strange.

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